

**George Mason to George Washington, February 18, 1775, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.**

**FROM GEORGE MASON, ESQ.**

GUNSTON-HALL Febry. 18th. 1775.

DEAR SIR.

I shall always think myself obliged to any Friend to communicate wth. Freedom & Candour whatever Doubts He may have of my Conduct towards him, as the most effectual means of preventing Misrepresentation; and I hope You will believe Me when I assure that You have greatly misconstrued my Intentions in making the Collection I mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Was either of Us to take the Advantage of receiving what He cou'd from those who are most able & willing to pay, leaving the other to scuffle as He cou'd wth. the Rest, it wou'd not only be unequal & ungenerous, but absolutely dishonest: the thing is self-evident, & needs no Proof. —

I thought that the Collection wou'd not be made by the Sherif 'til late in the Summer & that therefore collecting as much as We cou'd ourselves wou'd not only save Commissions, but expedite the Business, & reimburse Us so much the sooner. I had also another Reason; not finding that Similar Measures were adopted in the other Countys, I was, & still am of Opinion, that the Collection may be more easily made now than some time hence. I hinted Your taking the same Measures, & offered a Copy of the List of Tytheables, distinguishing such as had paid to Me: by these means I imagined We cou'd between Us, collect the

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greatest Part of the Money in two or three Weeks when a Dividend of what We had both received cou'd be easily made; leaving the Rest to be collected by the Sherif or by any other Person (if the Sherif refused) at his Leisure; & as I expected a good deal might be paid in Pensilvania Curcy. & paper Dollars, I thought, if Mr. Harper wou'd wait a few Days, I shou'd get such Money off my Hands (instead of being obliged to keep it upon my own Acct., without Injury to any one; for otherwise the advancing or not advancing the Money just at this time, makes not a farthing odds to Me, having kept a Sum by Me on Purpose; and nothing cou'd be further from my Mind than the Idea of making a partial Collection for my own seperate Benefit; it cannot but give Me Concern that I shou'd be thought capable of such disingenuous Conduct. I may perhaps be blameable for not explaining Myself fully before; but in a Matter so palpable, I had no Conception that it was necessary. —

It has not been in my Power to do do anything, since I came from Maryland, towards the Potomack River Bill; but I will apply to it as soon as I can, & when finish'd forward it to You.

—

By a Letter from Maryland Yesterday I am inform'd that his Majesty has ordered his Embassadors at the different Courts in Europe to declare his American Subjects in a State of Rebellion. —

I am, wth. my Comps. to Mrs. Washington & the Family at Mount Vernon, Dr Sir

Yr. affecte. & obdt. Servt. G MASON

<sup>1</sup> See ante, p. 109.